

January 2020



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Looking to Save on Prescription Costs? Don't be a Target for Counterfeit Drug Sales



America's healthcare costs are skyrocketing and many Americans look for ways to save, including turning to online pharmacies for cheaper prescription drugs. While there are legitimate online pharmacies, many are fraudulent. At best, they will take your money and fail to deliver the promised prescription. At worst, they could send you a counterfeit drug that may worsen your condition or be fatal. For instance, the media has reported on drugs laced with lethal doses of fentanyl.

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to avoid counterfeit prescriptions whether you are purchasing online or from your neighborhood pharmacy:

1. Before purchasing a drug online, go to the website <https://safe.pharmacy/> to make sure your pharmacy is recommended. If your pharmacy is not on the list, do not purchase drugs from the online pharmacy.
2. If the appearance or coloring of the drug seems different from what you expected, or if the packaging appears to be tampered with, this is a red flag.
3. If the pharmacy only requires you to fill out a questionnaire, the pharmacy probably sells counterfeit drugs. Legitimate pharmacies will always require you to submit a prescription from a healthcare provider before they sell any medicine that requires a prescription.
4. Make sure that the pharmacy has a licensed pharmacist available for consultations and provides you with contact information, such as a physical street address. If a pharmacy does not offer these basic services, it is probably illegitimate.
5. Regardless of whether you are getting your drugs online, at a neighborhood pharmacy, or in a provider's office, be wary of drugs that are offered at a substantially lower than market-value price. Use drug price comparison tools like [GoodRX.com](https://www.goodrx.com) to get an idea of what normal market prices are for a particular drug.
6. If you think you may have used a counterfeit drug, consult a medical professional immediately even if you are not experiencing adverse symptoms. If you have a suspicion that you have received a counterfeit drug, take it to your pharmacist. Pharmacists are trained to identify the appearance and packaging of legitimate medications.

There are many safe ways to save money on prescription drugs; you should never risk your health for a deal. By following the steps above, and by spreading the word to your friends and family, you can keep yourself and your family safe from fraud and serious health risks associated with counterfeit medications. If you would like to learn more about counterfeit drugs, you can also check out [Fraud.org's new Fake Rx Action Center](https://www.fraud.org).